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OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

August 2013

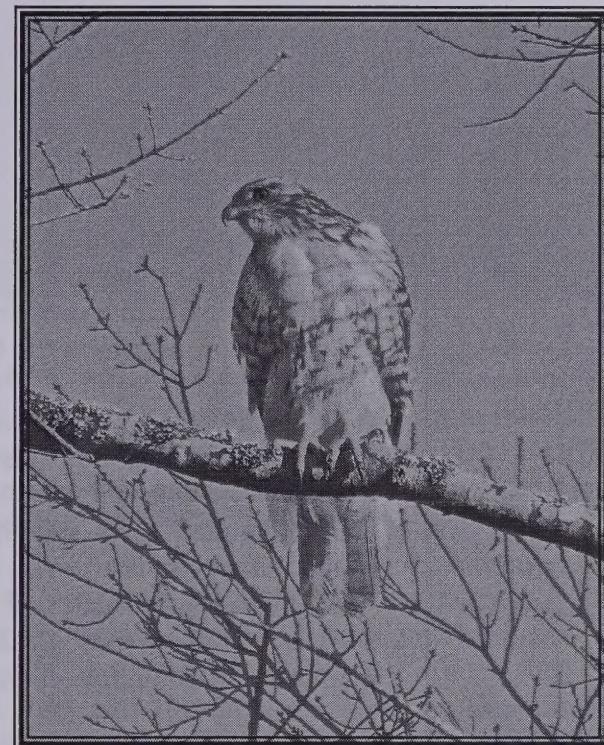
## COMING EVENTS AT LOBRANO HOUSE

The monthly luncheon meeting will be held on Thursday, August 15, 2013, at noon at the Kate Lobrano House. Guest speaker for the program will be Cheryl Grace, portraying Alice Moseley. **Reservations are required** and may be made by calling 467-4090. Please call by *noon on Wednesday, August 14, 2013*, to make your reservation, to help us plan seating which is limited to forty-eight people, and to apprise us of the number for whom to prepare. The price of the lunch is \$10.00.



## ANNUAL CEMETERY TOUR

Even though October is still a couple of months away, it's time to begin finalizing plans for the Hancock County Historical Society Annual Cemetery Tour. It will be held on Halloween night, Thursday, October 31, 2013, at Cedar Rest Cemetery on Second Street, Bay St. Louis. We will need volunteers to help prepare the cemetery for the tour (mark the path, etc.), to portray citizens buried there, to act as guides, and to serve at the Lobrano House.



Red-shouldered hawk

## Waveland Backyard Birds

By  
P. Chris Christofferson

I was invited by the Hancock County Historical Society to its June 20, 2013, luncheon meeting to share my photos of the migratory birds and ducks I sighted in the marshes of Waveland this past winter. It was an honor and quite a lovely introduction for me as a new member.

At the conclusion of the

meeting, I was requested to submit an article on one of the other many themes I've been photographing. Charles Gray and I thought my study of backyard birds, including seasonal visitors and year-round inhabitants, would be an interesting topic. Included herein are the birds I've photographed the past two years in my yard on Longo Street in Waveland.

First, the year-round denizens include the red-shouldered hawk, red-winged blackbird, starling, brown-headed cowbird, blue jay, red-headed woodpecker, red-bellied woodpecker, mockingbird, mourning dove, and house spar-

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# HISTORIAN

OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Eddie Coleman, Editor  
 Jackie Allain, Publisher

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## LOBRANO HOUSE HOURS

MONDAY — FRIDAY

10:00AM — 3:00PM

Closed: 12:00—1:00 (lunch)

## MISSION STATEMENT

"TO PRESERVE THE GENERAL AND ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY OF HANCOCK COUNTY AND TO PRESERVE THE KATE LOBRANO HOUSE AND COLLECTIONS THEREIN; TO RESEARCH AND INTERPRET LIFE IN HANCOCK COUNTY; AND TO ENCOURAGE AN APPRECIATION OF AND INTEREST IN HISTORICAL PRESERVATION."

row. Unfortunately, another year-round inhabitant, the magnificent neighborhood great horned owl, has evaded my camera (so far), but many of my neighbors have my number to call if they sight one.

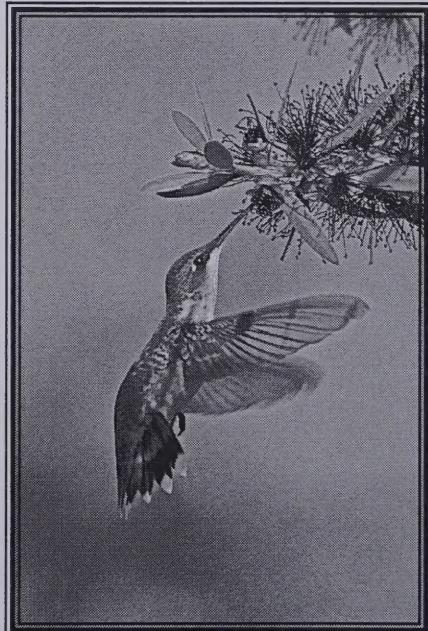
During this past spring the indigo bunting, painted bunting, and prothonotary warbler each rested for a few weeks during their migration, and what beautiful additions to my yard they were! Interestingly, only one male painted bunting was with the group of seven indigo buntings. The prothonotary warbler never visited the seed feeders but fed on insects in the bottlebrush shrub.

This year, only two ruby-throated hummingbirds visited for about two weeks in April and then continued their migration south. However, last year, I had five, and two were males. I understand from friends in Diamondhead that the ruby-throated

hummingbirds are still there. As everyone surely knows, the hummingbird drinks nectar, and a favorite nectar in our area is the aforementioned bottlebrush. Interestingly, the females are very aggressive and territorial, and I laugh as I watch the females race between hummingbird feeders and bottlebrush to drive off intruders. The hummingbird is the only species which can fly up, down, backwards, and forwards and hover, a truly amazing feat.

This year the robin surprised me by being here only a few weeks this spring instead of all year round as usual. So, if you see one, please let me know.

I did have a real treat at my feeder for only one day this spring: a pair of rose-breasted grosbeaks stopped on their migration route to their summer home in the northeast and middle United States and western central Canada. They are lovely in their black, red, and white



Ruby-throated hummingbird



Prothonotary warbler

feathers.

My yard is hosting only two summer arrivals this year. The Carolina chickadee spends the summer here, and, this year, I have only a pair compared to the twelve I had last year. They are so lovely and gentle compared to the demanding egos of the cardinals, blue jays, and woodpeckers that it is a joy to welcome their arrival. The Brewer's blackbirds also come through during the summer, and what a racket that large murder makes as they fill our trees and devour the food! I'm always delighted when they're gone.

I have five seed bird feeders all within ten feet of each other and my long office window in the back of the house. It's fascinating to watch the competition between the birds and to observe their various feeding techniques. Blue jays and woodpeckers charge the feeders, regardless of who's there, so far, running off all others except the brown-headed



Brown-headed cowbird on the left and a blue jay on the right

cowbird, which stubbornly hunkers down resisting all bullying. The red-bellied woodpecker has an exhausting eating technique. It fiercely waves its beak back and forth through the seeds, sending waves flying out until it gets just the one it prefers from the wild bird feed mix. It beats that seed into the same crevice of the tree until satisfied it is lodged tightly and then retrieves

it immediately to eat. The juvenile red-bellied accompanies the adult, watching how to transfer the seed from the feeder to the tree notch. Luckily, I have many mourning doves which get fat eating all the tossed out seed which lands on the ground!

The red-headed woodpecker has a different feeding technique. It levered its tail underneath the feeder and then stuffs its head into the tray, filling the length of its beak with seeds. It then flies off with a full load. I wish I knew if it shared, stockpiled, or what it does with so many seeds in one haul.

Maybe it's that I have woods behind my house and a constant food supply in a protected backyard, but for some reason the number of cardinals has increased dramatically this year. The color changes of juvenile to adult, male vs. female, and the molting cycle make them very dramatic to watch as they bicker over access to a feeder. I



Rose-breasted grosbeaks(left and right) with a cardinal between them

even have a regular which is a scary looking bald male with a black head. Still, another brilliantly shaded red male will chase away other cardinals and stand guard while his female eats undisturbed. I've also seen him take a seed from the feeder and give it to his female perched on the back fence.

Similar to people, the birds have their favorite seeds. The least favorite and most leftover seed in the feeders seems to be the millet.

On the other hand, the many mockingbirds in the yard seem to eat only insects as they never visit the feeders. They fearlessly follow my lawnmower and pick off the crickets I disturb.

#### REQUEST

I ask that folks in the Bay-Waveland community get in touch with me through email if they observe any birds in their backyards which I haven't identified. I also request that you include the season sighted and, if possible, a photograph. We could then have at the Historical Society a locally contributed inventory of these birds over time in a very distinct ecological niche. This does not include the beach and marsh birds living near your homes. An example of this request is the brown thrasher which hangs out at the Buttercup in Bay Saint Louis. None visit me on Longo Street in Waveland.

Thanks,

P. Chris Christofferson  
Email: photos@pchris.net

Their songs are the most complicated and long of those I'm learning to identify.

Another dramatic bird I'm photographing in my yard is the red-shouldered hawk. These predators sit in the tall pines and swoop down on unsuspecting small birds and rabbits. I have yet to have my camera at the ready for those dive-bomb attacks. However, one day I will.

Every morning, I fill my feeders and bang on the tree to alert all of my guests that breakfast is being served. My pleasure is indescribable to be able to begin each day seated about fifteen feet away with paper, tea, fruit, and camera to photograph the antics of these marvels of nature. I hope that in years to come more and more species will fill my yard as welcome friends.

#### Reflections of S. G. Thigpen

Compiled and edited by  
Eddie Coleman

*The Old Time  
Church*

In the old time churches when I grew up sixty to seventy years ago [early 1900's], the older people—the pillars of the church—sat up in the corner next to the preacher.

The country church in my community had two front doors. The men went in at one door and the women at the other, the women sitting on one side, the men on the other. This old church was well filled with uncomfor-

able home-made benches all fronting toward the preacher and the pulpit for about three-quarters of the way down. On each side of the pulpit were other benches placed at right angles to those in the main body of the church, the men on the preacher's right and the women on his left.

The corner where the deacons and older men sat on the preacher's right was known as the Amen Corner. Whether true or not, I always thought, as a boy, that this arrangement was planned so that these older men and women could keep one eye on the young people further back in the church. Another thing I used to wonder about was how a church member got promoted to the Amen Corner. While no one ever told me, the idea lodged in my mind somehow that when they reached a certain age and gained prestige and respect in the church they just walked over and started sitting in the Amen Corner.

The boys who went to that church were not supposed to sit in the back of the church. I knew better than to stop too far back so I always went up within two or three benches of the front.

We had services once a month. The preacher would come on Saturday, arriving about noon. The older people would attend what they called church conference, which was the business meeting, that afternoon. Then we would have the regular monthly preaching service at 11:00 A. M. on Sunday.

All in all, we had good preachers. Two that I remember well made good talks within the understanding of everyone. An-

other we had was just noisy—I never did understand what he was driving at. He did not stay long as pastor of that church. Another we had was so long winded that he would tire everybody out, preaching sometimes for two to two-and-a-half hours. Neither did he stay long.

Occasionally we had special services when some new preacher or a missionary came along. I remember a missionary from Persia who came to our house and spent the night. He showed us children how they wrote in that country, which was exactly backwards from our way of writing. Another time a preacher they were considering as a pastor came to visit our community. He made a good impression on everyone while visiting around among the people. As we had no pastor then, he preached at the regular monthly Sunday morning service. He had not been going long when he said he simply could not preach with his coat on. He shucked off his coat and laid it across the pulpit. A little later he said he could not get warmed up to preach a real sermon without rolling up his sleeves, which he proceeded to do. A few minutes later he said that he had never been able to do his best with a necktie on, so off came the tie.

As we started back home after the service was over, an uncle with us asked my father, "What did you think of him?" My father replied, "Well, he never did get off enough clothes." That preacher was not called in that church.

Another preacher we had made a good impression and for

about thirty minutes made a good talk, but he did not seem to know how to stop. He wore everybody out and did not last long. The benches in that old church were uncomfortable to begin with, but after about an hour they were almost unbearable. I well remember to this day, after about sixty-five years, how I used to twist and squirm and move about trying to get into a more comfortable spot. I was afraid to move about too much as I was always under the watchful eye of my mother who sat in the women's section of the Amen Corner. If I had to pick the most miserable moments of my life, they would be sitting there on an uncomfortable bench during the second hour of a long-winded preacher's sermon on a blazing hot summer day with sweat pouring down my back in that oven-like temperature.

The big event of the year in that community was the Big Meeting. The time was set well in advance. A "powerful" evangelist was secured, and the church and the grounds were put in "apple pie" order. The women all did their best in preparing for the "dinner-on-the grounds." They loaded the tables with all kinds of good food. Never since have I seen so much good food at one time. I would like to go back to an old time Big Meeting like we used to have, only I am afraid I would add too much to my already overweight.

One summer an old disreputable sot who lived near our community came to church regularly. He was under conviction from the start. In a day or so he joined the church. This sinner had been snatched from the jaws of hell to the joy of the faithful. He began

immediately to take a big interest in getting others to join the church. He became one of the best workers in that revival. Finally the preacher decided that he was worthy to be asked to lead in prayer. He called on him. The old man prayed from his heart with an eloquence rarely heard, reaching the hearts of everyone who heard him. Whether it actually happened or not—I did not hear it myself—people for years afterwards told of the trouble this man had when he came to the end of his prayer. He had never prayed before and had no occasion to use the word before and he could not for the life of him think of the word *amen*. He kept going, repeating himself, desperately trying to think of the word till the people were all so tired from being so long on their knees. Finally he gave up hope and ended the prayer with the only ending he could think of, "Sincerely Yours." In my opinion it was not such a bad way to end a prayer.

Church back then was a place where people met and visited. In fact church was the only place in our community where people gathered. The young people were good attendants, especially the marriageable young women and eligible young men. Many a romance bloomed and reached its climax at the old time country church.

My mother had a way of asking us what the preacher preached about and was displeased if one could not tell. My parents, like most in that area, took their religion most seriously and expected their children to do

so. Church was a sacred thing to them.

Thigpen, S. G. *Pearl River: Highway to Glory Land..* Kingsport, TN: Kingsport Press, Inc., 1965.

#### BOOKS FOR SALE AT LOBRANO HOUSE

*Bay Saint Louis: Celebrating the First 300 Years* (\$15.00)

*Gulf Coast Album: A Journey in Historic Photographs* (\$40.00)

*Lest We Forget—The Immortal Seventh Mississippi* (two volume set) (\$55.00/ set)

*Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College: A History 1911-2000* (\$35.00)

*Scrapbook of Treasured Memories* (\$20.00)

*West Side Stories: Before, During, and After on Mississippi's West Coast* (\$28.00)

Please see the ad on p. 8 for titles by Paul and Stella LaViolette.

#### BIRTH RECORDS

We have received copies of birth records kept by a Bay Saint Louis midwife from November 22, 1935, through June 9, 1947. They are available for review at the Lobrano House.

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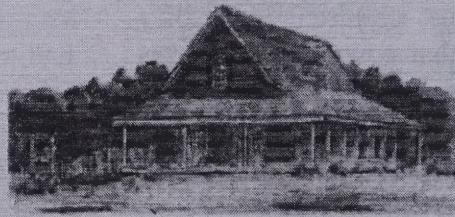
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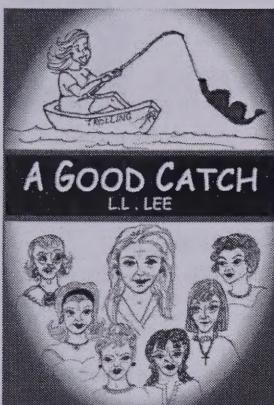
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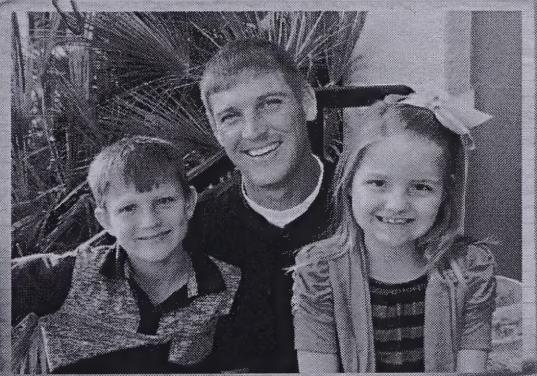
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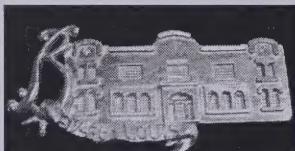
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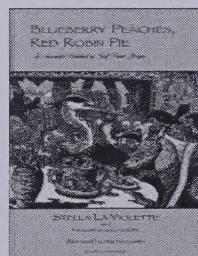
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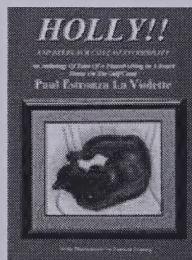
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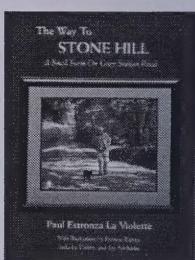
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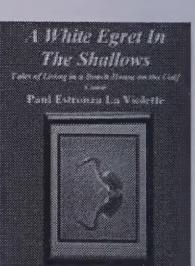
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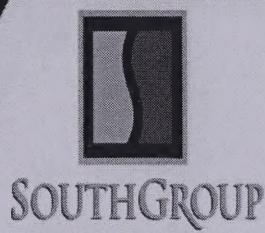
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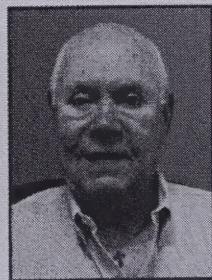
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Bay St. Louis Ms. 39520

## HANCOCK COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

POST OFFICE BOX 3356  
BAY ST. LOUIS, MISSISSIPPI 39521

### MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY, STATE AND ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ ]

PHONE (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

ANNUAL DUES \$25 \$\_\_\_\_\_